

ISLAM

Respect all religions

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

There are about a dozen major religions in the world along with thousands of other religions and sects. Differences and disagreements are bound to arise, which lead to conflict. How can we create an atmosphere of unity among the adherents of all these religions, so we can all live in peace and harmony?

The solution does not lie in removing religion altogether—that would not solve anything. The urge to believe in a greater power is strongly inherent in human nature, and human nature cannot be changed.

The solution does not lie in accepting that all religions are true. Realistically speaking, that is not possible. To everyone, the path of truth is only one, while false paths are many and varied. Thus, this proposal is not practical. Religion is not just a means to an end. It is the representation of Truth. If someone believes in a particular religion, it means that they are convinced that that is the Truth, and they stand in conviction of that Truth. The proposal that all religions be considered equally true defies the inner conviction of human beings, since everyone has a particular belief and faith that is the only thing they can be confident of in this world. In this world, which is full of trials and tribulations, strife and suffering, the Truth is the only thing that we can hold on to. The suggestion that we accept all religions as being true is not practical, and certainly not the solution to bring about unity.

The only answer lies in adopting a policy of religious tolerance, and respect for other people's convictions. Everyone is entitled to follow what they think is best and profess their belief in it. But this should not prejudice our opinions about other's beliefs. There should be mutual respect for each other's faiths.